

CONGRESSMAN ELIOT ENGEL

Working to Improve Our Health Care



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REPORT FROM CONGRESSMAN ELIOT ENGEL

Improving Health Care

Congressman Eliot Engel is a senior member of the House Subcommittee on Health. This report was prepared to update you on some of his actions to improve health care services.

Legislation Banning Genetic Discrimination

After years of hard work the Genetic Information Non Discrimination Act, which prohibits insurance companies from discriminating on the basis of genetic information was enacted into law in May.

Congressman Engel said, "Genetic information should be a blueprint to help people, and perhaps cure now incurable diseases. This information will now not be used to deny health care insurance policies and employment to people."

Voting for the Medicaid Safety Net Act

In April, Congressman Eliot Engel voted for a moratorium on seven Administration-imposed Medicaid regulations that would significantly cut the program over the next five years.

Congressman Engel co-sponsored the Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act, which included legislation he wrote to protect public and teaching hospitals from Medicaid cut. In May Congress stopped the hospital cuts.

"The proposed rules would impose cuts that would devastate state health budgets and harm the most vulnerable among us," Congressman Engel said. "It's another proposal to make up for the tax cuts for the wealthy by cutting medical aid to the poor."

Working to Improve Children's Health Care

Congressman Engel worked to pass two versions of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to bring health care insurance to 4 million more children and continue it for the 6 million now enrolled. Both were vetoed.

"I will continue my effort to provide health care for children. We cannot let a generation of children face the risk of being ill and unable to afford treatment," Engel said.

Known as Child Health Plus in New York, the program covers nearly 400,000 children, providing them with comprehensive health care coverage. It has reduced the number of uninsured children in New York State by forty percent.

Quality Health Care for All Americans

There are over 47 million uninsured Americans. Even those with health care insurance are at risk of losing it with the loss of a job or having coverage eliminated or reduced by employers.

To make sure all Americans have health insurance, Congressman Engel co-sponsored the United States National Health Insurance Act.

The Act would create a single payer system providing health care coverage to all Americans regardless of ability to pay and creating an American Health Security Standards Board and Quality Council to administer and insure quality health care.

"We need universal health care for all Americans," said Congressman Eliot Engel. "Quality health care should be a right, not an option. All Americans must have access to basic quality health care."

New Strong Drug Safety Legislation

Congressman Engel is working to expand the testing of drugs and health care products manufactured outside of America to prevent dangerous drugs and related products from being sold here.

He is working with other Members of Congress on drafting comprehensive legislation to close dangerous gaps in the foreign inspection system of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"We must protect people from dangerous drugs," Engel said pointing out that 81 Americans died from contaminated heparin alone.

The legislation would require more inspections of foreign drug firms and give the FDA the power to deny imports produced in facilities that refuse or impede an inspection.

Last year he co-sponsored legislation to establish a FDA program to monitor the safety of drugs after they are on the market and to increase penalties for drug companies that violate safety standards.



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